

Hello,

I'm writing in to submit my comment on the fairness hearing in front of Judge Simon related to United States of America v City of Portland, case number 3:12-cv-02265-SI. I was troubled to read about the amendments made to the Police Accountability Commission in November 2023 by our mayor and some of our city councilors, changes that I believe do not act in the interests of me or my fellow Portlanders. I'm glad to hear that they are now being reviewed.

While looking over the amendments I was surprised to learn that the police themselves would be allowed to have a say in what cases get brought to the board, and the language used to disqualify people from candidacy focuses entirely on vague concepts of "bias" against police (and curiously no concern for bias against the vulnerable communities that are the most common targets of unwarranted police aggression). In a climate where trust of PPB is at an all-time low among much of Portland's population, these qualifications alone should severely endanger the public's trust in the concept of a supposedly independent party reviewing PPB's work. Police departments have long had their own internal review processes, which have a recorded history of corruption (and even abusive retaliation) and a major point of the PAC was to move on from that system towards something that might bring about meaningful change.

The gutting of the ability to look at the results of the PAC's findings and insist on systemic improvements being made to the PPB as a result of their work seems odd and goes against the concept of "adequate". Almost all of us who have jobs have our work measured or assessed on some periodic basis and then we are given recommendations on how to improve what we do. This is very common for any job I've had in my career in the software industry, jobs of relatively limited scope and power. Why would police and the city officials that oversee them not understand the need to commit to the same for the police, which is critical position of power over the residents of our city?

The fact that many of the other amendments seem to be tailor-made to exclude Portland's populace (and especially its marginalized and most vulnerable citizens) from participating or even having a say as voters in future iterations of the process hardly seems to match any definition of "fair" or "reasonable". While I'm sure there are issues with the PAC (as someone with a 20-year career building complex software architecture can attest, no system is perfect when it's first deployed) the solution is not to wrest control from the people who voted on its existence in the first place and give it to those whose actions made it necessary.

Thank you for considering my comments, and let me know if there's anything else I need to do to have it accepted into consideration. I'm grateful for Judge Simon's—and everyone else involved—important work and fair consideration in this hearing.

Casey Kolderup
Portland, OR
August 26, 2024